

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6, and 9-13 are pending in this application. By this amendment, claim 1 is amended only to remove a previously-added feature. Thus, no new matter is added.

I. 35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 4, 5, 9, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2003-300420 to Shimizu (hereinafter "Shimizu") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,113,119 to Laurent et al. (hereinafter "Laurent"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In order to perfect priority, Applicants respectfully submit the attached verified English-language translation of the priority document (Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-181498) filed in the Japanese Patent Office on June 25, 2003, which predates the October 21, 2003 effective prior art date of Shimizu. Thus, Shimizu fails to qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102 and is excluded as prior art for purposes of 35 U.S.C. §103.

Additionally, because Shimizu fails to qualify as prior art, and because the Office Action acknowledges that Laurent fails to disclose all the features of independent claim 1, independent claim 1 is patentable over the applied references. Claims 3-6 and 9-13 are patentable at least for their various dependencies from independent claim 1 as well as for the additional features they recites.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:MJP/ejw

Attachments:

English-language translation of certified priority document (Japanese Patent
Application No. 2003-181498)

Certificate indicating English-language translation of certified priority document is
accurate

Date: August 5, 2009

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